

EPA: United States Environmental Protection Agency

[A-Z index](#)

2011 News Releases

EPA To Develop Regulation for Perchlorate and Toxic Chemicals in Drinking Water

Release date: 02/02/2011

Contact Information: Jalil Isa (News Media Only) (Prensa solamente), isa.jalil@epa.gov, 202-564-3226, 202-564-4355

WASHINGTON – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson today announced the agency's decision to move forward with the development of a regulation for perchlorate to protect Americans from any potential health impacts, while also continuing to take steps to ensure the quality of the water they drink. The decision to undertake a first-ever national standard for perchlorate reverses a decision made by the previous administration and comes after Administrator Jackson ordered EPA scientists to undertake a thorough review of the emerging science of perchlorate. Perchlorate is both a naturally occurring and man-made chemical, and scientific research indicates that it may impact the normal function of the thyroid, which produces important developmental hormones. Thyroid hormones are critical to the normal development and growth of fetuses, infants and children. Based on this potential concern, EPA will move forward with proposing a formal rule. This process will include receiving input from key stakeholders as well as submitting any formal rule to a public comment process.

In a separate action, the agency is also moving towards establishing a drinking water standard to address a group of up to 16 toxic chemicals that may pose risks to human health. As part of the Drinking Water Strategy laid out by Administrator Jackson in 2010, EPA committed to addressing contaminants as a group rather than one at a time so that enhancement of drinking water protection can be achieved cost effectively. Today's action delivers on the promise to strengthen public health protection from contaminants in drinking water.

"Clean water is critical to the health and prosperity of every American community and a fundamental concern to every American family. EPA is hard at work on innovative ways to improve protections for the water we drink and give to our children, and the development of these improved standards is an important step forward," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "Our decisions are based on extensive review of the best available science and the health needs of the American people."

Action on Perchlorate:

Scientific research indicates that perchlorate may disrupt the thyroid's ability to produce hormones that are critical to developing fetuses and infants. Monitoring data show more than 4 percent of public water systems have detected perchlorate and between 5 million and 17 million people may be served drinking water containing perchlorate. The science that has led to this decision has been peer reviewed by independent scientists and public health experts including the National Academy of Sciences. Perchlorate is both a naturally-occurring and man-made chemical that is used in the manufacture of rocket fuel, fireworks, flares and explosives, and may be present in bleach and in some fertilizers. This decision reverses a 2008 preliminary determination by the previous administration, and considers input from almost 39,000 public comments.

EPA will continue to evaluate the science on perchlorate health effects and occurrence in public water systems. The agency will also now begin to evaluate the feasibility and affordability of treatment technologies to remove perchlorate and will examine the costs and benefits of potential standards.

More information on perchlorate: <http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/unregulated/perchlorate.cfm>

Action on Drinking Water Strategy:

EPA will also be developing one regulation covering up to 16 chemicals that may cause cancer. This group of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which are chemicals such as industrial solvents, includes trichloroethylene (TCE) and tetrachloroethylene (PCE) as well as other regulated and some unregulated contaminants that are discharged from industrial operations. The VOC standard will be developed as part of EPA's new strategy for drinking water, announced by the administrator in March 2010. A key principle of the strategy is to address contaminants as groups rather than individually in order to provide public health protections more quickly and also allow utilities to more effectively and efficiently plan for improvements.

More information on drinking water strategy:

<http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/rulesregs/sdwa/dwstrategy/index.cfm>

Administrator Jackson's 2010 Speech on EPA's New Drinking Water Strategy:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/bbd6b38fa4f29ace852576ee004a4dde!OpenDocument>

[Receive our News Releases Automatically by Email](#)



[Search This Collection](#) | [Search All Collections](#)



[Get email when we issue news releases](#)

Recent additions

- 02/08/2011 [U.S. EPA: UC Davis Takes 1st place in National Football Game Day Recycling Competition](#)
- 02/08/2011 [EPA Submits Draft Hydraulic Fracturing Study Plan to Independent Scientists for Review / The draft plan is open to public comment](#)
- 02/08/2011 [Innovative Energy Technology Transforms Wasted Heat into Electricity](#)
- 02/07/2011 [EPA to revise permit associated with aquifer pump test at Weld County \(Colo.\) uranium site](#)
- 02/07/2011 [U.S. EPA to begin cleanup of former plating shop in Paw Paw, Michigan](#)